

# MASONRY IN MANITOBA

Published by Authority of Grand Lodge

VOL. 4

NOVEMBER 1948

No. 9

## THE SACK OF A TEMPLE

This is the title of a forty page brochure sent to the Editor by Brother George Renouf and it tells the story of the destruction of the Masonic Temple in the Island of Jersey. The booklet was written by Brother George Stodart Knoch "who was present on the spot," (and) put on record at the time to prevent those inevitable exaggerations which are bound to grow up when memory is the only guide.

The writer tells the story of building the Temple in 1862-64, gives a description of the building and its contents at the time the Channel Islands were occupied by the Germans on 1st July, 1940.

In January, 1941, special German S.A. troops arrived from France and made an inventory of the contents of the Temple. About a week later a squad of professional wreckers in German uniforms, totalling 65 in all, began their senseless work of destruction. Books, regalia, records, jewels, museum items, furniture of every kind were loaded up and despatched to the Continent. Pictures were torn from their frames and the War Memorial—a Brass Tablet honoring the names of those brethren who went from this Temple and fell in the War of 1914-1918, was detached from its fastenings on the wall and taken away.

The author has reproduced photographs of the interior of the lodge rooms to illustrate the wanton destruction of the invaders. He also reprints translations from German newspapers in which there appeared references to the loot seized in Jersey and displayed to the public eye in Europe.

A sequel to the "sack" reveals that in the spring of 1946 there was discovered at the Offenbach Archival Depot, in the American zone of occupation in Germany, a hoard of loot among which were found 18 packing cases containing articles identified as Masonic property belonging to Jersey.

After considerable negotiations 15 cases arrived in Jersey on 6th March, 1947; 3 cases having been stolen from the railway truck during transit in Germany.

After reaching Jersey an examination disclosed 240 volumes of the Masonic Library. No jewels or metal objects nor any regalia was found in the cases.

The interesting little book from which we have prepared this brief summary will be handed over to our Library where any brother interested in reading the whole story may obtain it upon request.



## ACROSS THE PORTAL

We addressed a few words to the sponsor in our last issue—now we have something to say to the man, who having been considered a fit and proper person to receive the rights and benefits of Freemasonry, has crossed the threshold and is now enrolled as an Entered Apprentice.

In the course of our ceremonies we emphasize that Freemasonry is a progressive science. As an Entered Apprentice you have been exhorted to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

As you participate in our ceremonies you will discover that expressly, or by implication, runs the theme of progress; a forward looking point of view, and this is in profound accord with the basic facts of life. Living organisms and institutions do not stand still, either they are making progress or they are going back. In every aspect of life there is ebb and flow, progress and retrogression. If we rest on our oars either the current will carry us onward, or more likely we shall be sucked back into the shallows of life. Drifters seldom progress; they always lose ground, often without perceiving this until it is too late. We are therefore either making ground or losing ground, and this condition applies just as fully within the Masonic Craft as in the outside world; perhaps more so.

The fact of progress is familiar, but few people pause to consider what the term implies, though it is quite clear and simple. Progress pre-supposes an ideal or standard to be attained and measures consciously directed to attain it. Many people have a goal of progress more or less fitfully before their eyes, but lack the resolution or the opportunity to attain it.

How many men, both within and outside the Craft, become disappointed because while envisaging the end to be attained, have not the persistence, resolution and faith to will the indispensable means? This is the cause of many of the disappointments of life in general and of Masonic experience in particular.

Both in Freemasonry and outside it, ideals and objectives may be of very different kinds, and of widely differing degrees of merit. Men may and do, according to temperament and outlook, pursue spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and material ideals, either singly or in combination. It is also possible for ideals to be the reverse of praiseworthy, to be selfish rather than altruistic, to be degrading rather than elevating, to be individual rather than social; but as a general rule a man actuated by any normal form of idealism is elevating himself, and others as well, to a greater or less degree.

It is with the idealism exemplified in Freemasonry that we are primarily concerned; and here the scope is very wide, affording opportunities for the most diverse characters, and temperaments, and affecting the individual brother, the Lodge or the Craft as a whole.



The opportunities enjoyed within our Fraternity, by the individual members, for service to themselves and to others are in fact without limit, because the scope of Masonic life, like the scope of Masonic charity, knows no bounds save those of prudence.

On entering upon his Masonic life a newly-made brother who desires seriously to implement his Masonic duties, and enter as fully as possible into the life of the Craft, may look in several directions, either separately or all together, according to his inclinations and the leisure at his disposal. In fact, if he does not look for the attainment of some Masonic ideal in at least some direction, one may say quite candidly that he has not lived up to the full measure of his responsibilities.

A brother may be specially attracted by the explanation of the cardinal virtues and the visions of social and community service opened up to him by the final charge of the E.A. degree. In such a case, the brother, if successful, will enlarge and ennoble his own personal outlook, elevate the tone and standards of his lodge, and diffuse throughout that section of the community with which he comes into contact a spirit of toleration, service and altruism that is always valuable as a tonic in community life and never more so than today. This represents perhaps the highest form of social service that a brother can render to his country, and it is none the less effective through being unobtrusive.

One could elaborate extensively upon the making of "daily advancement" but each in his own way knows best the method to follow in proportion to his ability.

In the first days following initiation it is not advisable that a young member should attempt to search in the vast field of Masonic symbolism, philosophy and history. The time will come when you will be better equipped to carry research into these foreign countries. Meantime give heed to the questions and answers you learned as an initiate and as you advance in Freemasonry so also will you improve in Masonic knowledge.

For the present you will do well to work diligently in making a daily advance in whatever sphere of life you move.

Freemasonry can give you much and you can give much to Freemasonry.

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## LOOK FORWARD

The election of officers in your lodge will be held at the November meeting. The newly elected Worshipful Master will then make the appointments for the junior officers. This is a solemn responsibility.

We should understand that officers are elected and appointed to give leadership. That is why great care should be exercised in the selection of officers in a Masonic Lodge.



What your lodge will be five years from now will very largely be decided by what is done as a result of your November election. The brother who is appointed to the first rung of the officer ladder expects eventually to reach the Master's Chair, and very likely he will. Surely then it is apparent that the best material in the lodge should be chosen. Don't make the mistake of thinking the letter perfect ritualist is the most desirable to undertake the task of successful leadership, especially in a Masonic Lodge.

Much as we respect the ritualist we can see greater opportunities ahead in a man who has other qualities of heart and mind and these are in very short supply everywhere at the present time.

There is much more to Masonic officer-ship than the formality of electing or appointing the individual. Too often the young officer is left entirely to himself to grope and struggle as best he can along the path which finally brings him to the East.

A strong and vigorous lodge must plant and carry into practice a constant program of instruction over and above the ceremonials governing the conferring of degrees. Too often we find the principal activity of our lodges centered entirely upon degree work. Such a plan was never contemplated by the men who brought speculative Freemasonry into our lives.

Constant effort to improve oneself in Freemasonry will lead the interested brother along pathways which will find expression far removed from the tyled recesses of a lodge room.

Every community has its own particular field of action. One would be bold, and indeed it is impossible, to set out in codified form a program which could be generally accepted. Here is where leadership comes in because the real leader will create and develop a plan singularly adapted to his own lodge and district.

The Freemason of today is the custodian of tomorrow. What the Craft will be five years from now will depend upon our actions and judgments of today. Therefore, come the November meeting of your lodge, consider carefully the men who will occupy office for the ensuing year.

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## ABOUT OURSELVES

This little monthly publication is your paper. It is prepared and issued for you in your individual capacity. It is not an official communication as between the officials of Grand Lodge and its constituent lodges—it is directed primarily to each brother. We hope we have succeeded, at least in part, in bringing some additional Masonic light to the membership.

Messages of approval have reached our desk occasionally, not very often, but our readers must realize that it requires more than laudatory words to keep the month by month issues newswy and informative.



From time to time we have invited the brethren to send contributions to our columns but our efforts in this direction have been practically fruitless. Only one such item has been received in the past six months. What a record.

There are more than twelve thousand Freemasons, or should we say members, in the province of Manitoba all of whom receive a copy of the paper each month. We make claim to have the finest and best on our roster and it would seem natural that from such a wealth of experience we should be loaded with material for our monthly paper. That is not the case but we are not in the least disheartened. We still have hope in our heart and some day there will be an awakening throughout the whole realm of Freemasonry and the Craft will rise to its greatest power and influence.

Our goal can only be reached by and through the individual because Freemasonry is not and never has been a mass movement.

With this little bit of philosophy off my chest may we once again invite you—yes, you—to send us a contribution for the information of your brothers.

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## WHAT'S DOING

The printed proceedings of Grand Lodge has been published and a copy sent to the Secretary of your lodge. This is an important volume because in it you will read the annual review of our activities which was presented at the last Annual Communication held in June. We do not believe the membership at large realizes that a copy is sent to each lodge and it is intended the brethren should have access to it when they desire to know about Grand Lodge and its many activities.

We have heard complaints from time to time that sufficient information is not communicated to the members. Well, the story appears in printed form and copies are distributed to all our lodges once every year so there is no excuse if you are not up to date in your statistics.

The most effective method of imparting what Grand Lodge is doing is to select a qualified brother and have him prepare a review of the Proceedings then set aside part of a lodge meeting and have him tell the story to your members.

Again, if your Master does not arrange for a discussion or consideration of the Proceedings then you should ask for a loan of the copy in the hands of the Secretary.

We commend this Masonic publication to your earnest consideration. We are satisfied that every brother who takes the time to read it will be amply rewarded and his knowledge of the Craft will be enlarged considerably.

Don't think it contains statistics only. There is interesting reading of educational value and it is suggested more of our brethren make use of this source of information during the long winter evenings.



## THE FOUR OLD LODGES

The brother who reads the literature of the Craft must have come across many references dealing with the development of Speculative Freemasonry in which the four old Lodges are mentioned. These four Lodges met and constituted the Grand Lodge of England on St. John the Baptist's Day, 1717. Only two of the original four still exist. They are the oldest Masonic Lodges under the register of England and are the Lodge of Antiquity No. 2 and the Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge No. 4. The Lodges who carried numbers 1 and 3 disappeared from the scene many years ago.

These two old Lodges meet four times a year to confer the three degrees: Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason, and the Installed Masters' Meeting. They hold joint meetings once each year. The notices to the members are joint and are by "command of the Worshipful Masters" and signed by each of the two Secretaries.

The last such Meeting of the two Lodges was held 23rd June, 1948, at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London. After the business was transacted, dinner was served in the Connaught Rooms of the Hall. Attendance at these meetings is restricted to the brethren of the two time-immemorial Lodges who appear in formal morning attire.

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